

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS NEWS – NOVEMBER 2005

U.S. Department of Commerce

International Trade Administration – U.S. Export Assistance Center

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WORLD TRADE CLUB MEETING NOV. 16, 2005 - LITTLE ROCK

Guest Speaker:

Ms. Sarah Wu

**Director of the Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office
New York City.**

Contact us at little.rock.office.box@mail.doc.gov for details and a registration form.

NEW FACE AT THE U.S. COMMERCIAL SERVICE

Israel Hernandez was recently sworn in as Assistant Secretary for Trade Promotion and Director General of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial by Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez. Hernandez served as Deputy Assistant to President George W. Bush and as a deputy to Senior Advisor Karl Rove. The U.S. Senate confirmed Hernandez on October 7, 2005.

MAJORITY OF VISA WAIVER PROGRAM (VWP) COUNTRIES MET DIGITAL PHOTO DEADLINE

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recently announced that the majority of the VWP countries met the October 26 deadline requirements to produce passports with digital photographs. Based on a Congressional mandate, the requirement for digital photographs is part of a multi-layered approach to increasing the security of our citizens and visitors by helping to ensure the integrity of their travel documents. Twenty-five of the 27 VWP countries achieved full compliance with the requirements. Most of the VWP countries have done so by producing passports with digital photos integrated into the data page of the passport. Beginning October 26, 2005, transportation carriers will be fined up to \$3,300 per violation for transporting any visitor traveling under the VWP to the U.S. who does not meet these requirements. Similarly, visitors traveling under the VWP arriving in the U.S. without the proper passport will not be granted entry into the country. For more information, go to http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id_visa/vwp/ or <http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/>

NETHERLANDS U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE'S MARKET OF THE MONTH

The Netherlands is a prosperous and open economy that is heavily dependent on foreign trade. The economy is noted for stable industrial relations, moderate inflation, a sizable account surplus, and an important role as a European transportation hub. Industrial activity is predominantly in food processing (e.g. Unilever and Heineken), chemicals (e.g. DSM), petroleum refining (e.g. Shell), and electrical machinery (e.g. Philips). A highly mechanized agricultural sector employs no more than 4% of the labor force, but provides large surpluses for the food-processing industry and for exports. The Dutch rank third worldwide in value of agricultural exports, behind the US and France. Other important parts of the economy include international trade, banking and transport. The United States is the largest foreign investor in the Netherlands and has its largest bilateral trade surplus in the world with this country.

The Netherlands' strategic location, the relative ease of doing business, the high level of proficiency in English, and its world-class and user-friendly transportation and distribution infrastructure make the Netherlands an ideal market and European operations location for U.S. companies. The Netherlands has capitalized on its location and advanced economy to become one of the top dozen trading countries in the world. The Netherlands is a geographically small, densely populated (16.4 million people) country occupying a highly strategic commercial location that makes it the "Gateway to Europe". Over 160 million consumers (roughly one third of the population of the expanded European Union of 25 Member States) reside within a 300-mile radius of Rotterdam.

Best U.S. Export Prospects to the Netherlands

- Automotive Parts and Accessories
- Construction Equipment (Bathroom Equipment)
- Computer Services
- Computer Software
- Environmental Products
- Medical Equipment
- Safety and Security Equipment and Systems
- Telecommunications Equipment
- Telecommunication Services
- Transport and Distribution Services

For more information go to <http://www.buyusa.gov/nl>

23 PROPOSED REVISIONS TO BUREAU OF INDUSTRY AND SECURITY'S LIST OF "RED FLAGS"

There are 23 proposed revisions to the BIS list of "Red Flags." These lists will go hand-in-hand with the Enhanced Proliferation Control Initiative (EPCI.) The proposed rule increases from 12 to 23 the number of circumstances expressly identified as presenting a red flag. This will raise the exporter's level of suspicion regarding potential foreign customers, as well as dealing with freight forwarders or other manufacturers. For a copy of the article on "Red Flags" contact us at 501-324-5794, fax 7380, little.rock.office.box@mail.doc.gov.

ADVANTAGES OF QUALIFYING GOODS UNDER NEW CAFTA RULES Edited from the Nov. 2005 Edition of IOMA's "Managing Exports & Imports"

U.S. companies currently ship over \$15 billion in goods annually to the CAFTA nations, making them collectively the 10th largest market for U.S. exports. Two-way trade with this market is predicted to grow substantially under CAFTA, with companies that invest the time and resources to participate standing to gain a substantial competitive edge. Contact us at 501-324-5794, fax 7380, little.rock.office.box@mail.doc.gov for the article on the advantages of qualifying goods under the new CAFTA rules.

UNITED STATES AND DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SIGN PARTNERSHIP TO SECURE AND FACILITATE TRAVEL AND TRADE From U.S. Customs and Border Protection Website <http://www.cbp.gov>

11/01/2005 - WASHINGTON, D.C.— U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Assistant Commissioner E. Keith Thomson, Office of International Affairs, and Director General Miguel Cocco Guerrero, General Directorate of Customs, Ministry of Finance of the Dominican Republic, signed a Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement (CMAA) between the U.S. and the Dominican Republic on October 31, 2005. This CMAA is designed to assist the two countries in improving the flow of travel and trade while securing them against terrorism and illegal activities.

"This Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement with the Dominican Republic Customs will enhance our operational processing. It will open the channels of communication to facilitate the secure and rapid exchange of information. It will protect the commerce between our two nations from terrorists and the terrorist threat," Commissioner Robert C. Bonner stated.

This CMAA will allow Customs officials in both countries to exchange information, intelligence, and documents that will prevent Customs offenses. In addition, this agreement will provide a basis for cooperation and investigation in the areas of trade fraud, money laundering, smuggling, export controls, and related security. The CMAA will be mutually beneficial to the

U.S. and the Dominican Republic by enhancing each country's ability to enforce Customs laws.

CBP IMPLEMENTS RULE ON WOOD PACKAGING MATERIAL IN 3 STAGES

Contact us at 501-324-5794, fax 7380, little.rock.office.box@mail.doc.gov for an excellent article on the recent implementation of the rule governing the use of wood packaging material.

U.S. SEEKS DATA ON CHINESE PROTECTION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

According to a press release from the U.S. Trade Representative Office, the United States has initiated a special process under World Trade Organization (WTO) rules to obtain information on China's intellectual property enforcement efforts. The United States is deeply concerned by the violations of intellectual property rights in China. Contact us at 501-324-5794, fax 7380, little.rock.office.box@mail.doc.gov for a complete copy of this press release.

UNITED STATES – AUSTRALIA JOIN EFFORTS TO VALIDATE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS From U.S. Customs and Border Protection Website <http://www.cbp.gov>

10/28/2005 - Washington, D.C. — United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Commissioner Robert C. Bonner announces a joint counter-terrorism passport alert system with Australia.

Recently, the United States and Australia have begun piloting an enhancement to their existing border management systems. The pilot system, known as the Regional Movement Alert List (RMAL), is an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) counter-terrorism initiative that will allow the automated checking of each others lost, stolen or otherwise invalid passport records, and, where appropriate, this prevents the use of these documents for travel. This system could identify up to three million lost or stolen passports across the Asia-Pacific region.

"This program is a giant step forward in eliminating document fraud and will help to combat terrorism and improve travel safety throughout the APEC region. This system will, from anywhere in the world, automatically share data on lost, stolen, or invalid documents," stated Commissioner Bonner. "The RMAL will have up to date information and assist in the ability to detect and prevent the air travel of known or suspected terrorists."

We hope you've enjoyed this edition of our newsletter. Any mention of non-government sources does not constitute endorsement. For comments or questions contact us at little.rock.office.box@mail.doc.gov
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